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123

William Lloyd Garrison,

Dear Sir,

I have had a peculiar desire within the past few weeks, to communicate with you on the momentous issues of the day. That desire has increased daily, until now I find it unpleasant to resist. I presume some explanation will be necessary in opening my subject to you. That we are strangers in person I will not deny, but we are united in the same cause which is as good an introduction as I can give. If I mistake not, your and my father are personal friends, but it is not upon his merits that I wish to form my your acquaintence, as I make it a point to always stand on my own merits as far as I can, when that fails then it is time to fall back upon some one else. With a short explanation I will come to the point. I am the only son of Abraham Allen, who is noted in the Southern

portion of Ohio, as being one of the early settlers of Clinton Co, a non-resistant from theory and from practice, and a "radical abolitionist" of the "Garrison" school," and in former years, an active member on the "underground rail-road" this latter I had almost forgotten, as the line, several years ago, was opened in a different part of the country, and trade went down on our line. He has, as you are well aware of, been a subscriber to the "Liberator" ever since its first issue, and I have been its reader ever since I was big enough to study and comprehend the picture at the top of the first page. And need I say that after imbibing its doctrines, and the teachings of my noble father, and in my boyhood days mingling with such men as Henry C Wright, Parker Pillsbury, Fredric Douglas, Stephen Foster, Charles Robinson and such women as Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Abby K Foster, and many other talented Ladies and Gentelmen who used to visit at my fathers house that I am radical too? I could swell this part of my letter to much greater lenght by telling you of the pleasure I have had in listening to speeches made by all the noted persons I have just named, also of the

pleasure in once listening to one of your masterly efforts in the city of Cincinnati, in behalf of suffering humanity, but I will not trespass on your time by so doing. A little past twenty three years of age, I find myself swept as it were by a violent hurricane down into a foggy valley where I stand enveloped in mystery, occupying, for me, an awkeward position and wondering as to its cause. I have been in the service of the United States, now thirteen months, and as weeks fly by as days, I become more and more puzzled with "mankind." When I see so many divisions among men, base fiery passions swaying the multitudes, corrupt and evil minded men, seeking, and filling offices of trust in high places; war and carnage sweeping over our beautiful land and in its wake desolation, the aid and counsels of those who seem to be right, sneered at and refused by those who are in power, when I see these things the fact becomes apparent that something is wrong, and when I ponder as to the cause I am led to make such queries as I now make to you. Will the principles of goodness ever prevail? Is Republicanism about to prove a failure?

Are we progressing, retrograding, or standing still? Can a Christian mingle in this conflict and be consistant? Such questions are continually arising in my mind and the conclusions I come to in trying to answer them, only help to arouse doupts in my mind; and when I ask of others, no two will agree as to results. I confess one great thing that keeps me in a state of uneasyness and torment is, the slow Policy of the "Administration" and the Generals. This is the great trouble of the whole army, the men want to put forth vigor, use thier utmost endeavors to put down this Rebellion and return to thier homes, friends and families they love, but the leaders hold them back and check thier fiery zeal by telling them to hold on a few days, and they will bag the "enemy" &c. Now you probaly see where I stand. Can you reconcile me to my position by showing me that this "war" will free the slaves, restore peace and harmony to this distracted land and finaly purge the country of all this contention and bring mankind up to the standard you

and your School have been endeavoring to place before the American people for so many years? If you can, I will be content to wait patiently the issue, and suffer all the privations of a common soldiers life, though that life be humiliating and to be eked out in the lonely hospital or die by hunger in some swamp, or fall by bullets in the trenches. All this, oh more, would I be willing to suffer for my country if by that suffering my country would recieve all the benefits I could ask. But this I know is impossible, as the days of martyrdom are past. With what feelings of sorrow do I remember the story, told me in my youth, of your trials my aged friend, when, in your days of vigor and prime, you were draged in the streets of Boston like a wild beast with a rope around your neck, by men who were more themselves the beasts. I often reflect upon the probable result had that piteous mob carried out thier base designs upon your person. Down trodden humanity would

have sung a mournful dirge over the burial of its best friend. No threats seemed to intimidate you, nor doupts shake your purpose. But steadz you have borne aloft your banner "Unconditional Emancipation" amid foes who clammored for your blood, until now, we find what you then promulgated as a principle, is about to be, or has been, adopted as a "Military necessity." What does this prove— First, that you had a clear conception of the principles of right, justice, and humanity. Second, that we are progressing. At a risk of answering some of any own queries made on another page, I will venture a few lines on this last proposition. I can see a decided change in some men who I knew intimately before coming into the service, who were very bitter against the black man, and any one who put forth any efforts in his behalf. Such men now are the ones who soy the loudest, "confiscate" "annihilate" Emancipate" any thing to put a stop to the "war" so that we can return to our homes. You will not be slow to percieve one very important truth in this connection.

That, though these men wish to abolish slavery, it is not from any motive out side of thier own selfishness; and is there not a possibility that at some not very distant day, these old rank prejudices, that are now lulled to sleep by selfish motives, may again possess these men and work evil, when we think all is safe? I fear it, my friend, and such forebodings as these make me ask you, "if we are progressing"? In conclusion I ask you what means this reviving of partyism? Democracy under the cloak of peace is assuming an attitude in Ohio, which seems to threaten a rupture between citizens here tofore good friends, and fears are entertained in the army by the soldiers for the safety of thier families at home. It may only be a convulsion of that dread monster slavery in his "death agony", if so God be praised. Will you give me your opinion as to the lenght of the "war," and also your feelings on the "Proclimation." It suits the majority of the men in the army to the letter. If it could only have come sooner. Pardon my trespassing to such a lenght. I would be much pleased to hear from

you at your earliest convenience.
My good wishes attend you and
the cause in which your life has been
devoted. It is a just and holy cause
for which the just rewards will be given
in the next and better world.

Yours in great respect,

Jacob H. Allen

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